

Audacity: Using this web tool to improve reading fluency among struggling readers

Abstract: For this professional development for teachers, I will focus on using *Audacity* (an online audio engineering website) to improve reading fluency with middle school and high school students. It has been proven that frequent practice of reading among struggling readers improves fluency. Using a web tool like this can help students hear themselves read and work collaboratively with peers and teachers to see how they can improve. Also, it can help struggling students be able to identify where their strengths and weaknesses are by hearing themselves read, while monitoring their progress.

This professional development will accomplish the following:

1. Educate teachers on not only how to use audacity

Educate teachers on theory and research that supports the use of this tool in the classroom, as well as using it to promote fluency

Constructive ways to incorporate *Audacity* in the classroom and use it with readers who are struggling to increase and promote fluency.

Overview: What do fluency and *Audacity* have in common? Fluency is defined as the ability to read with speed, accuracy and proper expression. Fluency, in other words, helps readers understand what they are reading. *Audacity* is the free online digital program that allows its users to process all types of audio for podcast by adding effects, timing, fading, trimming, and normalization. In other words, it is a program used to record and mix audio, allowing users to be amateur sound engineers. Why not infuse both fluency and Audacity together? By using Audacity specifically with repeated reading procedures as well as choral reading and echo reading, According to Wang, in *The effect of repeated reading instruction on oral reading fluency and its impact on reading comprehension of grade 5 English language learners* it has been found that "...repeated reading to be an effective technique for reading instruction...repeated reading procedures had a positive impact on word recognition, fluency, and comprehension across a range of grade levels." (Wang, pg 1). With that said, *Audacity* is the perfect tool to promote fluency.

Time-line: This professional development component that will take place over a span of 2 days (2 hours a day), and will be broken down into the following:

1. **Day 1:** Introduce to teachers the uses of *Audacity*, how to, etc. Theory and research on fluency and how it improves reading. Why use Audacity to improve fluency? Give examples. Have teachers experiment with the technology.

2. **Day 2:** Have teachers use *Audacity* by working in pairs to read, write down miscues, and give each other feedback on how to improve. Teachers will also rate themselves and how they are reading, Final reflection on how to use this in content area classrooms.

Lesson Plan: Day 1

Class: Professional Development to Middle and high school teachers on Audacity and its uses in the classroom to promote fluency

Time: After School (2:10pm -4:10 pm)

Instructor: Lauren Marfo

Content: Introduce to teachers the uses of *Audacity*, how to, etc. Theory and research on fluency and how it improves reading. Why use Audacity to improve fluency? Give examples. Have teachers experiment with the technology.

Learning Objectives or Learning Target:

1. I can navigate this new web tool of Audacity and learn to use its features.
2. I can understand how theory and research backs up the usage of repeated readings with *Audacity* to promote fluency

Materials:

1. "How to use *Audacity*" Handout
2. YouTube Audacity Tutorial Video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rQr5YVNqI0>
3. "Research that supports fluency" Handout
4. Personal Computers or tablet (one per pair of teachers, also, it will be assumed that all computers have the audacity program already installed on them. For sake of time.)

Procedures:

1. I will introduce what the premise of this professional development is for. I will begin by saying this intro "Hello my name is Lauren Marfo and I am a Masters student in Literacy Education 5-12 at Syracuse University. As teachers, we consistently have to keep up with so many things. One of them is making sure that all of our students in our content area classes are reading on grade level, and if they aren't, making sure that they are receiving the appropriate services to help get them on track, both in and out of the classroom. Research states that Fluency, is just one of many ways to improve reading among struggling readers. Why not use Audacity to do this? But before I say more about fluency, let me introduce you to Audacity, Audacity is a program that allows its users to be its very own sound engineers. You can make your own podcast, audio files, and more! Using repeated readings as a strategy for fluency, we can use Audacity. For today, you will not only learn how to use audacity, but learn how to apply it in your content area classrooms for improved fluency among your readers in your classes." (10 min).
2. I will show the YouTube tutorial on *Audacity* at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rQr5YVNqI0> (5min)
3. I will hand out *Audacity* handouts. "Now, I will hand out to everyone a worksheet that explains how to use Audacity, I will now explain, "Every one should be receiving a short handout on the how to of Audacity, as that is going around, please open up your tablets or computers, and open up to audacity. You will also look up to the projector and see Audacity here. I will go through a step by step tutorial with everyone. " I will then go through a step by step tutorial on how to use Audacity and its basic functions. (20min)
3. I will give the teachers about 20 minutes to play with the program and will come around to assist if anyone needs help (20min)
4. I will explain the research that supports using fluency in the classroom for struggling readers. In your classrooms, you may have several readers who may be reading on or below grade level. Research has been done to help guide us as teachers on what we can do to better help our students, especially equip them to be literate members in this fast paced society. I will hand out the research that promotes this idea. (40min)

5. I will allow teachers to utilize the rest of the time to play around with the *Audacity* technology on their laptops. I will say, “For tomorrow’s class, bring a passage from any content area that you would want to read for tomorrow (1 hour).”

Lesson Plan: Day 2

Class: Professional Development to Middle and high school teachers on Audacity and its uses in the classroom to promote fluency

Time: After School (2:10pm -4:10 pm)

Instructor: Lauren Marfo

Content: Have teachers use Audacity by working in pairs to read, write down miscues, and give each other feedback on how to improve. Teachers will also rate themselves and how they are reading, Final reflection on how to use this in content area classrooms.

Learning Objectives or Learning Target:

- 1.I can navigate this new web tool of Audacity and learn to use its features.
- 2.I can understand how theory and research backs up the usage of repeated readings with *Audacity* to promote fluency

Materials:

1. Personal computers for each pair of teachers with *Audacity* program already installed on them.
2. Rubric (Running Record)

Procedures:

1. I will introduce to teachers our next task. “Yesterday, we learned why research backs up this professional development (fluency and *Audacity*). Now you will be able to hear an exemplar podcast, of someone reading, work in pairs reading a passage text, and recording each others miscues. (10Min)
2. I will introduce to the teachers an exemplar podcast which has an example of me reading a text. I will then say, “When students are able to hear themselves reading over a period of time, it will improve fluency. (5min). “Just as you just heard an exemplar podcast of someone reading you will do the same in your pairs. Break up in to pairs.” (10min)
3. I will have teachers get into pairs, take out their sample passage,s they brought with them, and record each other reading. Each group in pairs are required to do an oral reading of the passage while answering this rubric. “For this task, you are required to record one another reading on audacity, write down each others reading on the running record, and then write it for yourself. This should take up to the rest of the time. I will come around if you need any help” (1 hour 10 min)
4. Closing: Now you see how helpful it is to have others hear you reading, but it is even more helpful to hear yourself reading, but you are able to pick up on your miscues much faster. For the rest of the time, please brainstorm in your content area groups how you can use this activity within your content area classrooms (10 min)

Running Record:Rubric

Note: Please keep in mind that this rubric is a subjective version of a running record. Running records in the future will be objective and include more, but this rubric will just be used so that you can understand the concept.

As you read you take turns reading your passages, make sure that you record their voice, using *Audacity*.

For your partner record the following as they read:

Record the words that this person miscues on:

How many miscues per line:

How many times did this person self correct:

Overall, name one strength and one weaknesses of this persons reading:

Now that your partner just read, you will listen to your own self reading and rate yourself using the same rubric you used for your partner.

Record the words that you miscued on:

How many miscues per line:

How many times did you self correct:

Overall, name one strength and one weaknesses of your reading:

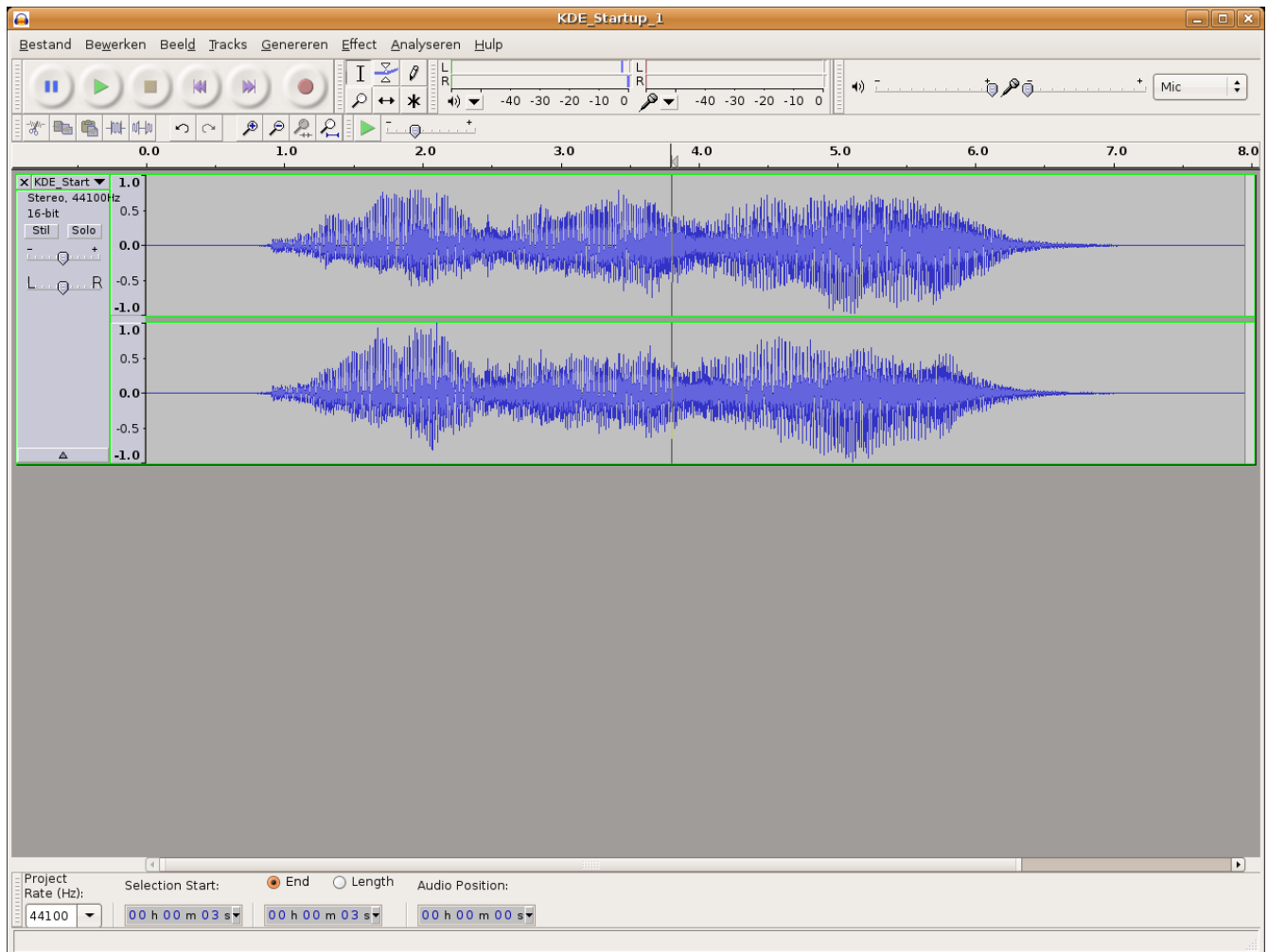
HOW TO USE AUDACITY: A SHORT TIP SHEET

To Record:

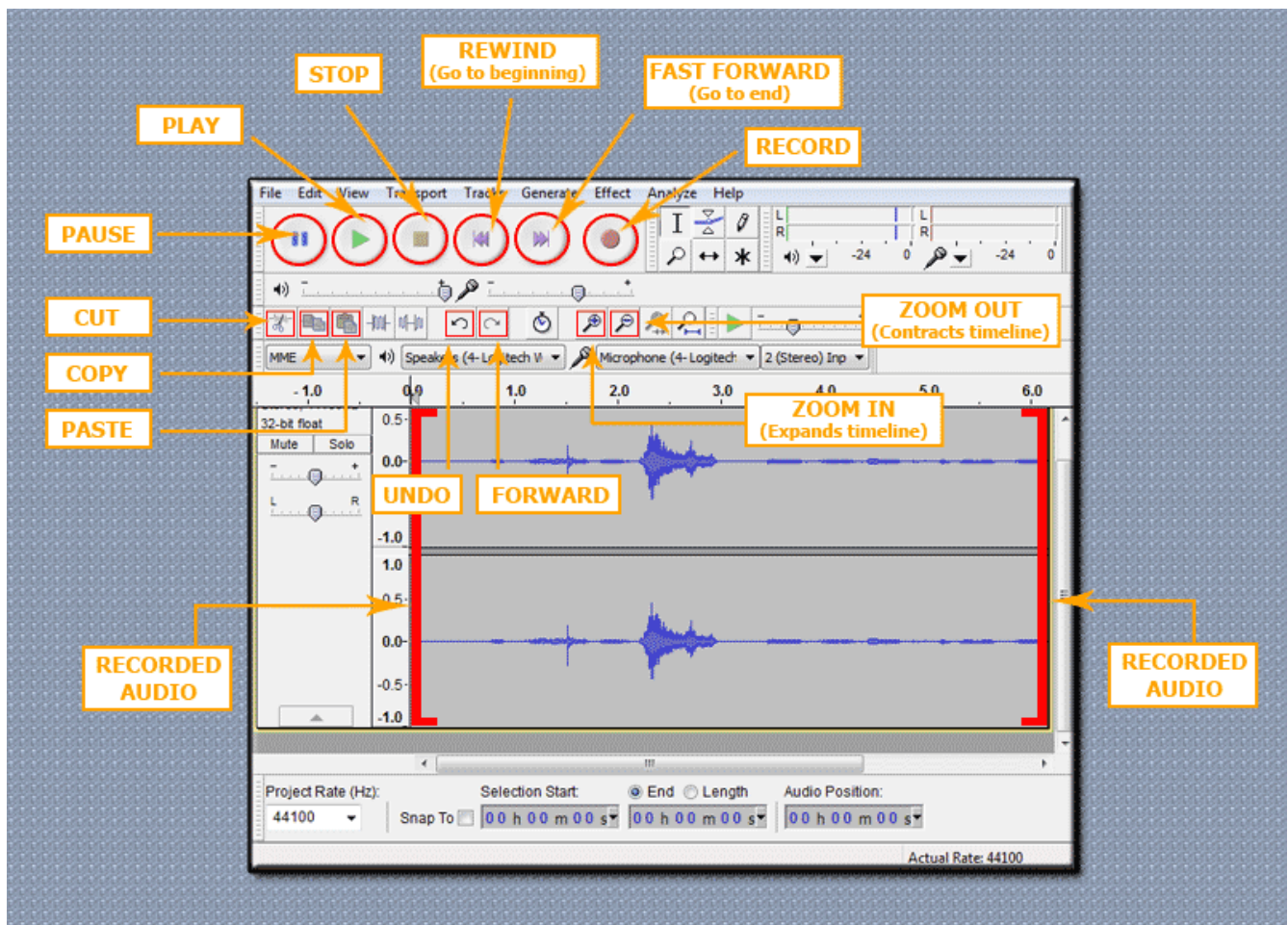
1. Make sure your computer is equipped with a microphone
when you are ready to record, press the red circle button. This will open up an audio box, as seen above.
When complete, press the yellow square (stop)

To hear what you have just recorded, press the green arrow which is the play button.

To make a new recording, press the red circle button and a new audio box will appear.



You have finished recording, now what? Its time to edit



Research that promotes the use of fluency in the classrooms

Chard, David J; Vaughn, Sharon; Brenda-Jean Tyler.(Sep/Oct 2002) A synthesis of research on effective interventions for building reading fluency with elementary students with learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 35. 5, 386-406.

□ “...reported findings on intervention features, including repeated reading with and without a model,

sustained reading, number of repetitions, text difficulty, and specific improvement criteria. Our findings suggest that effective interventions for building fluency include an explicit model of fluent reading, multiple opportunities to repeatedly read familiar text independently and with corrective feedback, and established performance criteria for increasing text difficulty. “ (abstract)

Thauberger, Carolyn. (2007) Partnering for fluency/Fluency Instruction: Research-based Best Practices. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 30. 1, 394-398.

- “...To achieve fluency, readers need repeated opportunities to read aloud the same words and similar patterns of words in connected text so that stimuli are mapped consistently onto the same responses throughout practice. Instruction must provide motivation and opportunities for this practice.” (abstract)

Rasinski, Timothy; Rikli, Andrew; Johnston, Susan. (2009) Reading Fluency: More Than Automaticity? More Than a Concern for the Primary Grades?. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 48. 4 ,350-361.

- “Indeed, Schwanenflugel et al. (2006) propose a "simple reading fluency" model for primary grade students in which ". . . fluent word and text reading operate together with autonomous reading to produce good comprehension" (p. 497).

Nichols, William Dee; Rupley, William H; Rasinski, Timothy. Fluency in Learning to Read for Meaning: Going Beyond Repeated Readings. *Literacy Research and Instruction* ,48. 1 (2009), 1-13.

- “Repeated reading is the most recognized approach for developing fluency, and although repeated readings have shown successful results in developing students' fluency.(abstract)